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SERMON DL.

BY REV. WM. T. HAMILTON, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT STREET CHURCH, MOBILE, ALA.

RETRIBUTION PROVIDED FOR IN THE LAWS OF NATURE.

"There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested."—MARK 4: 22. Compare with this, LUKE 12: 8: "Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light"

As might be expected in a revelation from God, the Bible contains matters that are striking; some that are obscure and mysterious, and some that are strange, startling, and at the first glance seemingly incredible. While yet reflection, patient examination, and sometimes the lapse of time itself, may serve to dissipate that obscurity, and to render plain and intelligible what once appeared incomprehensible. Many prophetic passages, once dark and unfathomable, have been thus elucidated. Other passages also, such as the text, "There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested;" and again, "Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light;" and again, such as this, "For every idle word that men speak, they shall give account thereof,"—mere hyperbole though we might perhaps, on a first hearing, deem them, may yet, on a little patient examination, be found to be *literally, strictly and severely true*. Such patient examination I invite you with me to give to the subject of *retribution*; to the position warranted by my text, that, *In all we do, we are responsible; and the consequences of our doings, without any one exception, we must meet!*

That man is thus responsible, as a moral agent, a great many plain and weighty considerations combine to show; as, *e. g.*:

1st. *His structure implies it.* Man, like all other created be-

ings, is dependent for continued existence, and for the supply of his ever-recurring wants, on the God that made him. But there is a wide, a marked distinction between man and all other of earth's living occupants. Like the beasts that roam around him, man has sprung from the ground he treads on, and he is nourished on the supplies yielded by earth in her increase. Like them, too, man is subject to infirmity, disease, suffering and death. But, unlike the other denizens of earth, man has a spiritual as well as a mere animal nature; he has an intelligent mind, no less than a material body. An immaterial spirit forms the essence of the living man; exhibiting powers, capacities, and susceptibilities, which appear to be entirely wanting in the brute creation. Now, it is a universally admitted axiom among thinking men, that God has made nothing in vain; and that all the several parts of things, the various objects in nature, are adapted the one to the other, and to the whole. *E. g.*: The root, the trunk, the branch, the sap-vessels and the leaves in plants; the gills, the fins, and the air-bladder in fishes; the structure and position of the eye, the ear, the stomach, &c., and the form and structure of the teeth in land animals, and of the wings and feathers in birds,—each and all show clearly the ends they were designed to serve, and the element or medium in which they were intended to be used. So invariable are the rules applicable in such cases, that from the skeleton, ay, from the mere fragment of a bone, scientific skill will determine with precision the position, the size, the power and the uses of the muscles, that bone was designed to sustain in the living animal,—the food on which that animal was nourished, the instincts by which it was moved, the element in which it lived, and the habits of its daily life.

Nor are the laws established and operating in the world of intellect and of emotion, the world of spiritual life, less definite or less stable than are those stamped on physical nature.

There is, in every human breast, inherent and deep-seated, a feeling that a right and a wrong there is. To distinguish between right and wrong, in most instances, there is the capacity; and invariably there is a feeling of obligation to adhere to the right and to shun the wrong. When this inward monitor urging adherence to the right is disregarded, and inclination to the wrong is yielded to in defiance of conviction, there speedily follows a feeling of uneasiness, a self-condemnation, and in many instances a dread of coming evil, consequent on that wrong doing. Now, this capacity to judge of the right, this conviction of obligation to adhere to the right, this self-condemnation, and this uneasy though indefinite apprehension, the result of disregarding conscience when wrong is done, are all peculiar to man; we see no indication of any thing like them in the brute crea-

tion. They distinguish man above all other tenants of our globe; they prove him a moral agent,—so made, as that he acts ever under the weight of responsibility for his doings; and they do therefore furnish a strong probability that, *evidently capable* of responsibility, responsible he is for his doings, and that he will be held and treated as such by his Maker. Otherwise, all these large capacities and distinctive susceptibilities have been given to him in vain. The very conformation of man, his moral structure and capacities, bespeak him responsible at all times. But further:

2d. *The Divine perfections confirm this view.* That there is a distinction between right and wrong is undeniable, and that adherence to right is conducive to the peace of society, and to the personal happiness of each individual, is certain. Nearly all the pains we feel and the unhappiness we experience are the result of wrong doing somewhere, either in ourselves or in others. To repress evil is to contribute to human happiness, and to do so much towards the banishment of unhappiness. To repress evil and to promote the right, therefore, benevolence itself would prompt. Now, inasmuch as justice is nothing other than an enlarged benevolence,—in other words, justice is benevolence guided by wisdom,—justice must demand that evil be repressed, and the right fostered. If, then, the punishment of evil doers, and that in exact proportion to the malignancy of the evil and the guilt of the evil doer, be the best, or if it be even an appropriate means of repressing evil, then justice and benevolence both demand that man be held strictly responsible for his doings, and punished according to his demerit. But God our Maker is a being of absolute perfection, wise, benevolent and just. In making man such as he is—capable of discerning between good and evil, instinctively impelled to do what to him seems right, and to avoid the contrary, and certain also to find his happiness and his entire well-being affected by his own conduct directly, and by the conduct of others almost as directly—God has, by the very perfections of his own nature, guaranteed the responsibility of man, and the punishment, in strictest justice, of all ill doing.

In this world such award is not always made. Sometimes it is, and strikingly so; as, *e. g.*, “when evil hunts the violent man to overthrow him.” But very often such award is not here rendered; for the wicked do, not seldom, live through a long and prosperous career, and die surrounded with honors. But the immortality of man assures us that hereafter there may be ample opportunities to clear up all difficulties, and vindicate the justice of a righteous God!

For, 3d. *The Bible emphatically asserts this doctrine, telling us of retribution awaiting all!*

"God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men in that he hath raised him from the dead." "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Again, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Again, "For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment!" and the text, "There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested." From these and sundry other passages of Scripture, it is plain that, if words can convey the idea, then the Bible does teach that retribution actually awaits every man, and that, for ALL his doings, he shall be called to a strict account. "The secrets of all hearts shall be made plain."

Further, 4th. *There is, and there always has been, an instinctive expectation of such retribution awaiting him, universally felt by man every where.*

Of this, the pangs of a guilty conscience, which no prosperity can quell, no honors can dissipate, no earthly distinctions can thoroughly allay, furnish clear indication. Agitated by remorse for his misdeeds, even when no apprehension of punishment from the hand of man could be felt, the guilty perpetrator of evil, high though he might be in command among his fellow-men, has found his prosperity unavailing, his joys embittered, and his very life a burden! Conscious guilt has driven men to voluntary confession of their crimes, and has impelled them to solicit punishment at the hand of human justice, as though with the hope of propitiating offended Heaven, and making some expiation, by present suffering, and so averting, or at least mitigating the Divine vengeance. Moreover,

The religious system of every nation under heaven recognizes, in some shape, the doctrine of human responsibility and a future judgment. You see it in the ancient tenets of China; in the Buddhist doctrines of Hindostan; in the classical myths of Pluto and his infernal domains, of Charon the ferryman of Styx, of Minos the inflexible judge of the dead, with the fabled joys of the shadowy Elysium, and the varied horrors of Tartarus. You see it in the trial of the dead among the ancient Egyptians, in their doctrine of the judgment of souls before the god Osiris, with the scribe of judgment, the god Thoth, and the forty-two judges in the region of Amenti.* It is stamped upon every line of their long ritual of the dead, in every pictured chamber of their countless tombs, and on every sarcophagus, on every

* See Wilkinson's *Manners and Customs of Ancient Egyptians*, 2d series, vol. II. pp. 2, 3, 74, 75.

mummy, and on every papyrus roll drawn from their innumerable cemeteries. Similar tenets have been found prevalent among the aboriginal hordes of this western continent, north and south; yea, even among the barbarous tribes roaming in the heart of Africa, recognizing a future life, a judgment after death, and punishments varied and appropriate to the delinquencies that had marked the life on earth of those arraigned in judgment; all, all evincing the presence in man's breast, find him when and where you may, of a deep-seated belief, that each act of man's life will, sooner or later, meet with its proper reward.

But it is well to observe also,

5th. That *many facts of every-day occurrence seem to foreshadow such retribution on the evil doer.*

If this life be probationary merely, then the full administration of justice can hardly be looked for at all times; and we know that many offenders do, in fact, long enjoy impunity. And yet, if God be just and all-wise, we may reasonably expect that he will so govern the world, and so shape the course of events, as that guilt shall be evidently frowned on, and uprightness and virtue favored as a general thing. And so, in fact, we find it to be. Virtue usually insures happiness and respectability. Vice is generally productive of misery; and although, now and then, daring offenders seem to escape with entire impunity, yet most generally evil doing does, sooner or later, yield a bitter return of shame, infamy, remorse and wretchedness. No caution can elude the Omniscient Eye; no skill can control the steady movements of Providence, which work to the detection and punishment of the deeply criminal. No daring can outface justice, or prevent its sure, though it may be tardy, vengeance. The guilty perpetrator of wrong may burrow in darkness, and work his secret way by cunning stealth. It avails him only for a time. Justice may seem to slumber long and profoundly; the guilty perpetrator of secret crime may be congratulating himself on his security; years may elapse after the commission of the evil deed; the guilty one may migrate to far-distant lands, and settle in a strange place, under a strange climate, and in a society where he himself is a stranger; and yet the seeds of vengeance sown by his own hand in the very act of his evil doing, years and years ago, shall all this time be germinating, and ready to shoot up to sudden and fruitful maturity, in disease that shall waste his frame and shorten his life, or in evidence of his guilt, that, like the fast multiplying threads of a spider's web, shall be accumulating around him, and closing in upon him, and bringing on exposure, infamy, ruin and wretchedness, complete and incurable. "*The wicked shall not be unpunished.*" God has said it, and facts occurring every day prove it true!

Hide where he may, flee whithersoever he may, justice, sure though tardy, dogs his footsteps, and with the certainty of fate, falls upon him in vengeance at a time and in a mode oft least expected. The grand lesson stamped upon every page of man's history is, God is just, and *retribution is certain*. For,

6th. *Man's intellectual structure prepares him for it!* As a preparation to full responsibility there is needed, not only reason to qualify for the investigation of truth,—judgment aided by the moral sense to decide what is wrong and what right in the several emergencies of life as they arise,—together with conscience, that faculty which includes a sense of obligation to do right and to shun evil,—and also self-condemnation or remorse for evil consciously perpetrated; but there is needed also the faculty of memory, to retain the knowledge that may have been acquired. Without memory, remorse would be unfelt, and punishment must be a nullity; for the suffering included in punishment would lose its penal character if the memory of the guilt that called for it were lost. Each pang endured would be forgotten as soon as felt; the consciousness, and indeed the entire being of the sufferer, would all be concentrated in the passing instant. The future is unseen; the past, were memory extinct, must be a blank. But memory lives in every bosom, and memory cannot die. It lives beyond the death pang and beyond the grave. “*Son, remember!*” cried the father of the faithful to the spirit of the rich man tormented in hell. “*Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood!*” sing the ransomed around the throne of the Lamb in heaven; plainly showing that in heaven and in hell memory still lives, and will live for ever, growing probably in clearness, in strength, and in vivacity, as rolling ages move on. The existence and the perennial vigor of memory warn us of a coming retribution, and fit also for a full appreciation of its power. It needs, then, but the presence of some adequate prompter to memory, to awaken it to life and action,—to spread before it some imperishable record of the past; and this will produce a complete recognition of every item, prepare the man to meet the full force of retribution, and thus *render that retribution certain!* But,

7th. *This imperishable record of the past the material universe is, by the very laws of nature, so arranged as that it shall certainly furnish; and in so doing it yields convincing evidence to establish the certainty of retribution full and complete, beyond the possibility of a doubt.*

For, *what the police is in a vigilant human government, that the very elements around us are, in the government of God.* The laws of nature will, on man's last trial, furnish witness to convict him.

A rigid mathematical demonstration might be adduced to

establish this fact. When you move, each foot-fall shakes the earth. When you act, you stamp the image of your emotion on your own spirit, and upon the face of the physical universe itself. When you speak, you breathe forth your own soul upon the elements, and you send it abroad bearing the impress of the passion that agitates it, subtle as thought and indestructible as space. Our inner spirit is a self-registering instrument. The passing moments are time's leaves, each catching and retaining a history, daguerreotyped, fixed for ever,—borne on and on to the grand archives of eternity, there laid up safe in the repository of the Almighty, and constituting "*the books*" out of which men shall be judged!

Look now at the facts, and ponder them well!

Take your stand by the side of a tranquil lake. Throw into it a pebble, and mark the result. From the point where that pebble strikes the water, you see the circling ripple spread, and enlarge and widen, ripple beyond ripple, wave beyond wave, until the agitated water breaks in tiny waves upon the distant banks. A little reflection will satisfy you, that as that stone sinks to the bottom of the lake, every single atom included in the entire mass of water in that lake is forced out of its place, and the whole is agitated, until each particle settles in a new position, different, both positively and relatively, from that which it held before. In like manner, when a ship founders at sea, nay, when a corpse is cast overboard into the deep, not only is the water immediately around that foundering ship, or that sinking body, agitated and displaced, but the motion extends and spreads far as ocean reaches; and it affects the waters of the ocean on its remotest shores, in its deepest estuaries, and in all the streams that empty into it, though to our imperfect perceptions that motion is *lost* long ere it reaches the nearest shore. Now, the effect of that agitation and displacement of the particles of ocean's waters must *tell* on the position and mutual relation of each particle of all those waters, and that through all coming duration. After such agitation each particle occupies a new position, different from what it previously held: on the next agitation its starting-point is different from what it would have been otherwise; its point of after subsidence and rest is therefore different; and so of the next succeeding agitation, and the next, and the next,—and so on indefinitely through all coming ages. This, then, must be one of the almost innumerable elements that enter into the problem which must be solved, if you would demonstrate the condition of things, the final result of all the influences brought to bear upon the ocean, from its first production up to the moment of ultimate examination.

So also the air of our atmosphere is a fluid, subjected to laws analogous to those affecting all other fluids.

Sound is the effect on our organs of hearing, produced by the circling waves of air in motion. The crashing thunder, the booming of artillery, the sharp crack of the rifle, are familiar illustrations. At sea the discharge of a cannon can be heard for many miles. It agitates the air, the waters, nay, the solid earth itself. The comparatively feeble sound of yon organ's pedal bass can be not only *heard* at the distance of several furlongs, but to a person walking at a distance of some hundreds of yards, when those notes are sounded, the effect on the solid earth itself is felt in the trembling of the ground beneath his feet as he treads. Does this effect stop where man ceases to perceive it? No: it rolls on and on, till its spirit-like echoes break on the shores of distant worlds unseen.

You raise in full chorus a hymn to the praise of God. To the ear of man that sound is lost at no very great distance; but it dies not there. The waves of sound roll on, spreading widely, and yet more widely, until they break in sweetly echoing ripples on the ear of angels; till they roll in spirit-breathing waves to the foot of the eternal throne.

The man of God retires to his closet for prayer; the sons of riot are loud in mirth and boisterous in revelry and blasphemy; in softest tones the lover breathes into the ear of the loved one the vows of affection. These words of prayer, these tones of plasphe-my, or of ardent love, roll on the ever-moving waves that traverse all space, outlast all time, awaken the echoes of eternity, and they must hereafter meet the speaker, an imperishable evidence of his emotions—the undying echoes of his uttered thoughts! But if the air and the ocean be thus impressible to acts, and tenacious of the impression once made, equally so is the solid earth. If the heavings of vast earthquakes must communicate motion to each particle of the globe, so too does the spring of the tiger, and the tiny foot-fall of the infant.

Take a capacious vessel; fill it with large stones, and inspect it when carefully suspended at some distance from the ground. Ascertain its precise weight, and measure exactly its distance from the ground. Now abstract one large stone, and you at once perceive the effect. Its weight is diminished, and it rises a perceptible distance higher above the ground!

Next, place a similar vessel suspended like the other, but filled with sand, with fine dust, or with wheat flour. Ascertain precisely its weight, and its exact distance above the ground. Abstract now one grain of sand, or one single particle of dust, or of the flour. Your closest scrutiny fails to detect any change in the weight of what is left in the vessel, or any change in its elevation above the earth. Yet you know with certainty that a change has been produced in both these respects, by the abstraction of even one single particle of dust. The weight is

diminished and the vessel has risen, although your senses are too limited, and your finest instruments are too imperfect to enable you to measure or even to perceive the change. So also, when you throw a pebble up into the air and it falls again, just as truly as when huge rocks, dislodged from the mountain's summit, fall crashing down Alpine gorges, motion is communicated by the concussion to every particle of the solid globe, and the earth itself vibrates in its progress along its orbit. The effect may be infinitesimal, but it is real; and its consequences on every particle of the vast globe remain for ever. The globe itself retains, through all its countless atoms, the apportioned shares of the motion so impressed upon each one. Each single atom lies in a new position, a new point of departure for the next motion that shall be impressed upon it, and the next, and the next, through all after ages!

Each passing day, then, each striking hour, each fleeting moment, bears thus its record to the imperishable archives of eternity. These are the deposits of a man's life, left in the accumulating strata of time. They are the fossil remains of man's spirit, the casts of his passions and emotions that will be disinterred in the researches of the great day!

Further still: No one thought, no one emotion dies in the MEMORY; it becomes *a part of the soul*, and it is imperishable as eternity. Memory holds it all; faded it may be, ay, *almost lost here*; but eternity is the grand chemistry that shall bring out the secret writing, fresh as at first, indelible and eternal, and conscience will recognize its identity.

It might at first view be supposed, that since so many various influences have been, through all time, exerted upon the waters of the sea,—as *e. g.* islands rising and being again submerged, ships cleaving the billows in every direction, storms sweeping over the surface of the deep,—the effect of all this must be a result so complicated, that it is as good as lost. To our limited capacity it may appear so; but in reality it is not so. The final result is made up of all the results of all these several influences. No one of them is lost! Were any of them wanting, the final issue were different. One Mind there is that can and does trace all these numerous and complicated influences, and understand perfectly the final result.

So also, amid all the waves of motion affecting the *air* around us, the *earth* we tread on, and *each object* holding a place upon it, wave meeting wave, influence crossing influence, the determination of the final result, as that result shall be presented in the *aspect of nature, in the condition of our bodies, and in that of all the several members and particles of which the body is made up*, would present simply a *problem of compound forces affecting a certain given quantity or condition of things*. A problem far too vast and

complicated for us *now* to solve. To God it is all plain. Even to angelic minds it may present a problem not too complicated for comprehension; because, though these influences are *numerous and complicated*, they are not infinite, they are limited, and they *may* therefore be comprehended by created minds: but if so, it is at least possible—it is not indeed improbable—that they may yet be comprehended by us, when in eternity the deposits of time shall be disinterred, and we shall see the successive imprints of all our several acts and thoughts in life, shall gaze on the living portrait of each emotion, and shall hear the resuscitated echo of each word we have ever uttered; for, says the Son of God himself, “*There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested;*” and, “*What ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light.*”

The art of man can, even now, catch and delineate the features of our countenance, with the expression they wear at any moment, and can fix the likeness permanently there. That likeness the artist does not create; it is there already, floating in the sun-beam; the artist has merely found the means of ascertaining its existence, catching and retaining it. So that the skill of God has made the very elements his instruments, and every moment, as it flees away to join the ages past, bears with it a daguerretyped likeness of the man, soul and body both, and fixes it for ever. Every object is a plate, and the world itself is a great gallery of historical paintings, each true to the life.

Oh! when this moral chemistry, which is perpetually operating, has at length done its work, and the process is complete, what a task to look on the result, and there to see our life's history, in all its minutest points, depicted with unerring truth, stamped on air, on earth, on sea, and on every object around us, and stamped on the soul itself!

In the cycles of by-gone ages, the rolling floods of ante-Adamic oceans bore away, and deposited beneath the comminuted wrecks of the worlds they had inhabited, race after race of former occupants of earth and its waters, and deposited them in successive series, layer above layer. In subsequent ages these strata of fossil races were by fresh convulsions of the globe cast up, and they are now laid bare to our inspection. They are gazed upon now, the medals of creation, as they have been felicitously designated, a palpable evidence of the life, the habits, and the condition of earth-born races, long, long since passed away!

So now the waves of time are continually bearing away, and depositing in due order, in a regular series, the *débris* of this moral world,—the impress of our thoughts and words and actions, borne away and deposited on the shores of eternity,—the fossils of our deeds, the buried remains of our passing existence, the imperishable evidence of the successive stages reached

in our spiritual development; *i. e.*, in the progress of our moral being, good or evil.

To use the language of another, (see Babbage, the ninth Bridgewater Treatise, Chap. IX. pp. 113, 114, 119,) who has, I find, anticipated me in this idea, which, until I met with this passage, I did really suppose had originated with myself:

"Thus considered, what a strange chaos is this wide atmosphere we breathe! Every atom, impressed with good and with ill, retains at once the motions which philosophers and sages have imparted to it, mixed and combined, in ten thousand ways, with all that is worthless and base. The air itself is one vast library, on whose pages are for ever written all that man has said, or woman whispered. There, in their mutable but unerring characters, mixed with the earliest as with the latest sighs of mortality, stand for ever recorded vows unredeemed, promises unfulfilled, perpetuated in the united movements of each particle, the testimony of man's changeable will!" And, I may add, the proof of man's guilt; and equally, also, the evidence of the sorrow of the penitent, and of the zeal and fervor of the pious.

"If the Almighty stamped on the brow of the earliest murderer the indelible and visible mark of his guilt, he has also established *laws*, by which every succeeding criminal is not less irrevocably chained to the testimony of his crime. For every atom of his mortal frame, through whatever changes its severed particles may migrate, will still retain, adhering to it through every combination, some movement derived from the very muscular efforts by which the crime itself was perpetrated."

"When man and all his race shall have disappeared from the face of our planet, ask every particle of air still floating over the unpeopled earth, and it will record the cruel mandate of the tyrant, the bitter words of unkindness, the oaths of the profane, the filthy words of the wicked. Interrogate every wave that breaks unimpeded on ten thousand desolate shores, and it will give evidence of the last gurgle of the waters which closed over the head of the dying victim of piracy, or of suicide. Confront the murderer with every corporeal atom of his immolated victim, the seducer with the victim of his baseness, and in the still quivering movements of each atom he will read the evidence of his guilt, and hear the echo of the damning charge, '*Thou art the man!*'"

Most truly then may it be averred, that the air we breathe, the loud booming of ocean's billows dashing on the sandy shore, the earth itself, and every individual particle of which its vast mass is composed, unite in corroboration of what the Son of God declares: "*There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested!*"

Man is responsible in every act and every word, and ample and minute is the retribution awaiting him!

For: His structure, corporeal and moral both, implies it; the perfections of God his Maker demand it; the Bible unequivocally asserts it; men have always, every where, universally expected it, and they do now expect it. Many facts are constantly occurring, even now, to foreshadow it; for the guilty has to work in secret, and vengeance, though tardy, is sure to overtake him; man's internal structure prepares him for it, since conscience fortells it, and undying memory qualifies him to meet and to appreciate it; while the material universe itself is so arranged as to establish and to secure it, in the preservation of evidence full in point to every fact, and that cannot be lost; for *even the elements are God's ever vigilant and active police!*

So that the elements amid which we dwell, the very material substance of which our bodies are composed, the roar of the restless ocean, the howl of the wintry tempest, and the softest breezes of the summer's eve, all—all proclaim it: "*There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested!*"

There is one thought awakened by the subject now discussed, which may well arrest our attention: *How unutterable the worth of the blood of Christ!* The God of nature is the God who will judge us! On every particle of the material universe we inhabit, this God has impressed laws, the laws of nature, which render every atom upon us and around us, our whole life through, a witness to the truth, in every deed and act of our probationary life; the very act we do stamps upon the earth we tread and upon the air we breathe the impress of the fact, and secures the evidence of our guilt, truthful, unchanging, incorruptible, and eternal. Man's vigilance we may baffle, man's power we may elude; but Omniscience we can neither baffle nor deceive; and Almighty power we can neither resist nor flee from. Let life flow on, then, smoothly and tranquilly to its close, still judgment awaits us! Oh, my hearer! in that hour when, summoned to meet God as your judge, you look around for shelter from the gathering storms of wrath, whither will you flee? If you look to the earth on which you passed your term of probation, its every particle bears the mark of your sin, and presents evidence of your guilt! If you would breathe forth the words of entreaty on the air, the air itself rolls back upon you the thick-coming echoes of your words of folly, of sin, it may be of daring blasphemy, spoken on earth! If you would lift up your hands to deprecate the stroke of justice, every particle of matter that goes to form the substance of those hands, and of that whole body so long perverted to purposes of sin, shows the dark stains of your ill doing, the evidence of your guilt. Heaven blazes on your head with the kindling fires of justice! Hell rolls its fiery billows, dashing and roaring hoarsely the demand for justice! Your own trembling heart groans forth its foreboding of

justice ! Nor heaven, earth, nor hell, yields one solitary spot secure from the desolating storm of Heaven's avenging justice — save only the Cross of Christ, and where the blood which flowed down that cross has been applied. *That blood cleanses from all sin !* That blood, alone, washes out the stains of guilt, stills the rolling thunders of God's vengeance, quenches the kindling fires of his wrath, and with its soft pleadings for mercy, overpowers, gently but effectually, the rising cry of justice, of hell, and of the whole universe arrayed against the trembling offender, and demanding his condemnation ! With all nature rising up in evidence against you, every material atom you have ever used, or touched, or felt, standing forth in attestation of your unworthiness, demanding your doom, and exhibiting the proof, clear, full, and imperishable, of your guilt, the pledge and guarantee of your condemnation,—proof, to bribe off which the wealth of both the Indies were worthless, to rebut which the learning, the wisdom, the skill and ingenuity of men and angels combined were all impotent,—nothing, nothing but the blood of Christ will aught avail. But that blood extinguishes all this damning proof of guilt ; calms the frowning face of Justice itself ; shields the trembling believer from all harm, and leads him safely home to the bosom of God—the paradise of the blest !

Fellow-sinners, now—now, while yet it may avail—ere yet the storm of Heaven's wrath bursts upon your head—apply to that Saviour—trust in that precious blood—and you shall live, live forever ! To you and to me, there's nothing worth a thought in comparison of the one grand inquiry : How may I find myself washed in the *blood of Christ* ? Seek it now—plead for it now—trust in that blood now, and the fact that you have done so will stand forth prominent above all else, in that last awful day, when it shall be obvious to all, amid the roarings of the last conflagration, “ *There is nothing hid that shall not be manifested !* ” Amen !

SERMON DLI.

BY REV. D. B. COE,

SECRETARY OF THE AMERICAN HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

GAIN FROM CHRIST'S EXALTATION.

"And greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."—JOHN 14: 12.

THE great crisis of our Saviour's history has at length arrived. His enemies have bribed one of his professed friends to deliver his Master into their hands, and under cover of night they have already assembled, with the traitor at their head, to arrest the innocent victim. He well knows their designs, and sees that "the hour is come." But while his enemies are preparing their torches and arms, determined that he shall escape their hands no longer, how is the Saviour himself occupied? In arming his friends to resist the expected assault? No! In planning measures for his escape? No! He is administering comfort and encouragement to his disconsolate followers. For the last time he had eaten with them the feast of the passover, and had instituted an ordinance to commemorate his death. He had then announced distinctly his approaching departure. They are overwhelmed with sorrow. What can they do without their beloved Master? They are few in number, humble in rank, despised and persecuted by their countrymen; and if their Saviour is taken away, the shout of triumph will be raised over his grave, and his cause will be buried with him. No wonder they are disconsolate, for they cannot comprehend the meaning of this unexpected bereavement. Christ, therefore, though in full view of his coming agonies, proceeds kindly to impart consolation to them: "*Let not your heart be troubled.*"

He first points to the mansions in heaven which he is going to prepare for them, and then assures them, that though he is about to depart, his cause shall survive. Nay, by the fact of his departure his cause shall gain new strength. I go to do more for it in heaven than I could do on earth; and through the aid which I will impart, each one of my followers shall be able to accomplish more than I should do if I should remain. "He that believeth on me, the works which I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father."

Wonderful words! Some have not dared to believe them in

their plain and obvious meaning, and therefore have restricted their application to the working of miracles. They would have us believe that Christ meant simply to assure his disciples that they should work greater *miracles* than he had wrought. But the promise in this sense was not fulfilled. No miracles were or could be greater than those which Jesus wrought. "He made the dumb to sing his praises, the lame to leap for joy, the deaf to hear his wonders, the blind to see his glory." The winds were hushed, the sea was calmed, demons fled, water became wine, the hungry were filled, the trees withered, the dead revived, at his omnipotent word. And when he is laid in the grave, where, to mere mortals, there is no more work, he performs his crowning wonder. He throws off the cerements of the tomb, bursts away the barricade of rock, and walks forth a conqueror. What mightier works than these did his disciples perform? But it is said that, while Jesus wrought his miracles by words, Peter's shadow was made to heal the sick, and Paul's handkerchief to cast out devils. So, I answer, the Saviour's touch, and even the hem of his garment, did the same things.

But that Christ did not refer to the working of miracles by his disciples, is evident also from the fact that this was not the comfort they sought. What they wanted most of all, was the assurance of the success of the Saviour's cause, and of his presence and aid *for that end*. Whether this aid were afforded in the form of miraculous gifts, or of strength to endure temptation and to resist enemies, they cared not, if only the cause of their blessed Master might triumph. It was in reference to this, doubtless, that Christ meant to comfort and encourage them. He would have them understand that his death would be no detriment to his cause. On the contrary, from that moment its greatest triumphs should commence. They should be able to do more without his personal presence than they had done with it. Even the humblest believer in him should have greater success in the work of saving lost men than had attended his own labors. Does any one say that the expression, "greater works," is more descriptive of the working of miracles than of the conversion of sinners? I answer, No. It was a great work to stop the orbs of heaven in their course, as did Joshua; but it is a greater work to arrest in his career of guilt a self-destroying sinner. It is a great work to kindle a fire from heaven upon an altar of wood, as did Elijah; but it is a greater work to kindle the fire of Christian love upon a sinner's heart. It is a great work to raise a dead body to life, as Christ raised Lazarus; but it is a greater work to quicken with spiritual life a soul dead in trespasses and sins. There is no greater work on earth or in heaven than the conversion of a soul.

If this be the import of Christ's promise, then it was most

signally fulfilled. The narrative of his personal ministry is remarkable. Though he spake as never man spake; though the most sublime and affecting truths were continually falling from his lips; though he opened to the world exhaustless treasures of spiritual knowledge; yet how few seem to have been converted under his ministry! His sermons often excited wonder and admiration, but oftener the rage and abuse of his hearers. His first public discourse, in the synagogue of his native town, roused the fury of his fellow-townsmen, and they strove to kill him. His sublime and wonderful Sermon on the Mount excited much astonishment, but we know not that any were converted under it. Matthew concludes his record of the discourse with this single remark: "The people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." You may examine the record of all our Saviour's teachings, and you will find that those truths which, in modern times, have proved the power of God to the salvation of multitudes, produced, when first announced from the Saviour's own lips, almost no effect. His public ministry continued about three years. During this time he labored incessantly; preached frequently, and to vast multitudes; and enforced his doctrines by his many miracles of mercy, and his spotless life. Besides this, his twelve disciples and the seventy other brethren had been preaching and working miracles through the country. And yet, at the time of his ascension, the number of believers seems to have been small. For on so important an occasion as the election of an apostle, and afterwards at the pentecostal prayer-meeting, only one hundred and twenty disciples assembled at Jerusalem, though it was at one of the great festival gatherings of the Jewish nation. This seems to indicate that the number of Christ's followers was not yet large.

But he has now ascended to the Father, and behold the fulfilment of the promise. Behold the "greater works" which he foretold. Peter stands up on the very spot where Christ had often preached in vain, and his words are "fire and hammer." The stubborn hearts of the Saviour's murderers melt beneath the burning words of the preacher, like wax before the flame. Three thousand—a greater number probably than Christ and his eighty-two assistant preachers had gathered during their whole ministry—three thousand souls were converted under that one sermon; and in a very short time the number was increased to five thousand. Surely these were greater works than Christ performed.

So it was afterwards; till, within thirty years, the standard of Christianity had been planted in almost every province of the then known world. So has it been from that day to this. Witness the glorious results which have ever attended the dispen-

sation of the pure Word of God. Witness the achievements of the Reformers. Luther drags forth the Bible from the dusty alcoves of the cloister, proclaims its truths in his native tongue, and all Europe starts from its sleep of ages. In later years, Whitefield and Wesley blew the trumpet of the gospel with a distincter sound, and with glorious success. In our own country, the preaching of Davies, Edwards, and the Tennents produced such results, that the world cried, in amazement, "Who are these that fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows?" Witness, too, the results of revivals in our own day, and the wonderful success of missions in pagan lands. Surely Christ never produced results like these. His promise to his disciples has been signally fulfilled. They have achieved, and are destined yet to achieve, in his vineyard, greater works than his.

II. Now let us examine the reason which Christ gives for this remarkable declaration. "*Because I go unto my Father.*" What connection had his exaltation with the performance of these greater works by his followers? I answer :

1. *It afforded additional evidence of his Messiahship.*

The Jews expected that, by putting Christ to a violent death, they should convince all that he was a mere man and an impostor; that he was not therefore the expected Messiah. Hence their desperate determination to murder him. They *did* murder him; and in that sealed and barricaded sepulchre, where they thought to bury with him every vestige of his claim to the Messiahship, they beheld the crowning proof of his divinity. He bursts his tomb, and walks forth, death's conqueror, and therefore heaven's King and earth's Redeemer. He appears to many, instructs and counsels his disciples, then vanishes before their eyes in the clouds of heaven.

Here is a new truth, a new argument, a new weapon. Christ liveth; therefore he is the Messiah, and you, his murderers, have crucified the Lord of glory. Christ liveth; therefore his glorious promises and terrific threatenings are true; he liveth to execute them. Christ liveth; therefore we shall live and rise to meet him. "Behold, he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him." These were the new and victorious truths with which the apostles went forth to the conquest of the world. With tremendous effect did they wield them. Jesus Christ was declared, says Paul, to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead; and this mighty truth, the bequest of the risen and ascended Saviour, has ever been an important element of the power and instrument of the success of his gospel, from that day to this.

2. Christ's followers were enabled to do greater works than his, *through aid of his intercession.*

He alluded to this, among the words of comfort which accompany our text: "I will pray the Father for you." And what wonder that, with such an intercessor, the Christian should be so mighty in his Master's service? The promise is, "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do." What though we are weak and erring? What though our prayers are so imperfect? What though we lift to heaven hands all stained with sin? We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, whom the Father heareth always; and with such a friend at court, our cause is safe. The resources of Omnipotence are placed at our disposal, and we are strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

3. Christ's followers are enabled to do greater works than his, *through the aid of the Holy Spirit, which he has given them.*

"It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Mark these words: "It is expedient *for you*"—not for *me* only, but for *you*. It is better for you that I should go. I leave you for your good. I leave you, that you may have in my stead the Holy Ghost, whose presence will be more available to you than mine. The Comforter could not properly commence his peculiar work till the atonement was completed, and Christ had left the world. Great, then, as was the value of Christ's society to his followers, it was expedient that he should leave them, and that the Spirit should come in his stead. They gained greatly by the exchange, for, the moment the Spirit came, they commenced their "greater works." Truth was armed with new power; Satan fell as lightning from heaven; the temples of Paganism were overthrown; her oracles became dumb; and the stone hewn out of the mountain without hands, commenced growing to that great mountain which shall yet fill the whole earth.

We think it would be a precious privilege, if we could have the Saviour walking our streets as once he walked the streets of Judea; if we could worship with him in the sanctuary, and in the place of social prayer; if he could enter our dwellings and bow with us at the family altar; if we could listen to his counsels and instructions, and receive his gracious benediction. But not if the Spirit must leave us. If we can have but *one*, let us have the blessed Comforter, in whose presence and power is the only hope of this lost world. He it is that cheers the fainting heart, that confirms the tottering steps, that wipes the weeping eye, that guides the wandering feet. He it is that gives to the Word of God its conquering power, and melts before it the stoutest heart into penitence and love. Oh! how precious is this, the Saviour's parting gift! He is indeed a Comforter—the Comforter. In him is our strength, our hope, our victory.

4. "Greater works than these shall ye do, because I go to my Father." This is true again, because, *when Christ went to his Father, he was exalted to the headship and kingship of his Church.* This relationship is thus described in the glowing language of Paul: "And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Christ then is our head ; we act as his agents ; our works are his works. But he works now, not as when he was on earth, as a man clothed with human weakness and infirmity, but as a throned and reigning King. The Father has said to him: "Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." "He must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." Through us, his humble followers, this conquest is to be achieved. It is for this that he has given us the power of doing these "greater works." For this, he enables one to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight. For this, he has given us the Church, with all its mighty agencies of good. For this, he has given us the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. For this, he has given us prayer, the key of Heaven's exhaustless treasury. For this, the heavenly Dove is sent to hover over us, and descend with converting and sanctifying power upon the hearts of men. For this, angels are ministering spirits, aiding us in our work. Oh ! it is *the greatest, the most glorious work* ever undertaken in our world. We, the humble followers of Christ, have it to do ; and with his promised help we shall do it. Our success is certain ; our victory is sure. "I, the Lord, will hasten it in his time."

Now, if Christ's followers are invested with such powers, then,
1st. *It is plainly our fault that so little is accomplished.*

When the promise in our text began to be fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, when one sermon was the instrument of three thousand immediate conversions, and when a few more added two thousand to this number, it must have seemed to those who beheld these wonderful achievements of the Galilean fishermen, that nothing could prevent the speedy, universal triumph of the gospel. Within thirty years from that time, one might have said, in surveying their labors, "At this rate, not two centuries will elapse, before the whole world will be converted to Christ !" But, oh ! how different has been the result ! Eighteen centuries have poured their mighty tide of immortal souls into the gulf of despair, and the Prince of this world has the immense majority yet. During half of this time the Church has

been in a dead sleep. And since she was awakened by the morning clarion of the Reformation, how slow has been her march! With the resources of the reigning Saviour and the converting Spirit in her hand, how little has she done! Here and there one, conscious of his power, or of God's power in him, has done battle gloriously in this cause; but, *as a whole*, how little has the Church accomplished! How little is she doing now! Now and then a scattered few in the ranks arouse themselves, and strive manfully for a season, and hundreds flock to the standard of the cross, showing what "mighty works" they can do if they will; but then they drop to sleep again, and the enemy prevails.

Look at the Church at the present moment. She has wealth, talent, numbers, the Saviour's commission and instructions, the Spirit's presence and aid,—all that Christ has promised, all she will ever have; and yet, is she fulfilling her mission? Is she doing her work? Is she hastening to take possession of the earth for her King? No! she is standing nearly still. In some portions of the field she is even going *backward*, and the enemy is gaining ground upon her. Shame, shame on the soldiers who retreat, with such a Leader and in such a cause! Why should it be so? Why should the head clad with the helmet of salvation droop and nod at the post of duty? Why should the hands that bear the shield of faith hang down in apathy? Why should the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel retreat before its foes? Are we not faithless to our Leader, and recreant to our high trust? How can the Saviour ever fulfil his glorious design with such followers? Were it not for his immutable *promise*, we should expect that he would drive us all from the field, and from the very stones raise up children unto Abraham. Oh! it is a fearful thing to enjoy such privileges, to possess such resources, to be intrusted with such interests, and yet to be accomplishing so little for Christ and a dying world!

Finally *In the promise of Christ to his followers, they may find unfailing ground of encouragement.*

Amid the dust and heat of the conflict in the Church militant, we are too apt to look down to earth, and, seeing so many enemies, and difficulties, and hardships, so much work to be done, and so few coming to our help, to become discouraged, and faint. This we must not do. And that we may not do it, we should look *up*—up to the throne of our risen and exalted Saviour, our Captain, our Intercessor, our conquering King. This the great apostle did, and it nerved him anew for his conflict. This he exhorts others to do, and it will have the same effect upon them. After enumerating that glorious constellation of departed worthies, who from their high seats are wit-

nesses of our conflict,—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Rahab, Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets,—he exclaims: “Wherefore, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.” *Looking unto Jesus!* Here is the crowning encouragement. Let it cheer and sustain you in all your labors, and amid all your discouragements. Looking unto Jesus as your *advocate*, presenting your humble prayers perfumed with the incense of his own sacrifice, and strengthened by his own availing intercession. Looking unto Jesus as the bestower of the *Comforter*, that almighty helper whose aid is the pledge of our complete success. Looking unto Jesus as head over all things to the Church; as enlisted with you, therefore, to subdue all things to himself. With his eye turned upward to such a Saviour, how can a Christian faint or be disheartened? There is not a more appropriate watchword, or a more effectual stimulus to Christian effort and prayer, than *looking unto Jesus*.

It appears then, my brethren, that, furnished as we are with such auxiliaries and encouragements, we can accomplish far more for the salvation of men and the honor of God than we are accomplishing, more than we ever have accomplished, more than has ever been accomplished, at least since apostolic days. It must be so. The promise of Christ proves it so. The world will never be converted, if it is not so. Zion must put on new strength, and her march must be attended with more rapid success, or the day of millennial glory will never dawn upon our world. Not that any new agencies are to be employed, or any new measures devised. We have all the resources, all the facilities, all the instruments that we shall ever have, and all that we need. But in those same old agencies, the preaching of the gospel, prayer, holy example, Christian liberality, zeal, self-denial, there is a wonder-working power which we have not yet developed nor discovered. It is latent. If we will but employ these agencies as we ought—do our best with them—we shall be astonished at our success; and the miracles of primitive times will be forgotten, amid the grander miracles of converting grace which we shall witness. My brethren, let us make the experiment, and see what will be the result. Let us bring all these tithes into the store-house—labor, self-denial, faith, prayer—and see what miracles of power and glory will be wrought among us. Let us do it for the sake of him who has intrusted these resources to our use. Let us do it for the multitudes around us, and for a world perishing in sin. Let us do it for our own spiritual profit, and for that crown of glory that fadeth not away.

A B S E N C E F R O M G O D .

My God, my Maker, I have called thee my all-satisfying portion, and my eternal good. When I contemplate thee, I stand amazed at thy grandeur; thy wisdom, thy power, thy fulness of blessing, wrap my soul up in astonishment and devout silence. In that happy moment my soul cries out, "What are creatures when compared with thee, but mere shadows of being, the faint reflections of thy light and beauty!" And yet, stupid as I am, I soon lose my sight of God, and stand gazing upon thy creatures all the day, as if beauty and light were theirs in the original.

What are they all, O my God, but empty cisterns that can give no relief to a thirsty soul, unless thou supply them with rivulets from on high? And yet we crowd about these cisterns and are attached to them, as though they were the unfailing springs and fountains of our blessedness. Every breath we draw is a new and unmerited gift from heaven; and yet we are contented to spend that life far from heaven and from God, and to dwell afar off from him, amidst the regions of mortality and death; we are ever grovelling in this land of graves, as though immortal blessings were to be drawn from the clods of it.

Our real and eternal interests depend more on thy single favor, than on the united friendship of the whole creation; and yet, foolish wanderers that we are! we absent ourselves from our God, and rove far and wide to seek interests and friendships among creatures whose character is weakness, vanity, and disappointed vexation. How fond are we of a word, a look from a worm in a high station! How do we caress them and court their love, at the expense of virtue and truth, and the favor of God our Maker! And yet they are nothing without God, but he is our all without their leave.

Should my father and my mother, and every mortal friend forsake me, and every good angel take his flight; should these heavens and this earth, with all their innumerable inhabitants, disappear at once, and vanish into their first nothingness; thy presence with me is all-sufficient, thy hand would support my being, and thy love would furnish out an eternity of life and coeval happiness. Why, then, do I tie myself so fast to my mortal friends, as though my separation from them was certain misery? Why do I lean upon creatures with my whole weight, as though nothing else could support me?

O my God! I am convinced that I have more affairs, and of far higher importance, to transact with thee, than with all thy creatures, and yet I am ever chattering with thy creatures,

and say little to my God ; or at best give him a morning or an evening salutation, and perhaps, too, with indolence and formality. Whom have I in heaven or on earth but thee, that can supply all my wants, and fill up all the vacancies of my heart ? And yet how are my thoughts and hours busily employed in quest of satisfaction among the shining snares, or at best among the flattering impertinences of the world ; though every new experiment shows me they are all unsatisfying ! If I happen to find any thing here below made a channel to convey some blessing to me from thy hand, how prone am I to make an idol of it, and place it in the room of my God !

How much, alas ! do I trust to my food to nourish, and physic to heal me ! but it is thou alone that can bless me with ease, nourishment and health, while I dwell in this cottage of flesh and blood. Let medicines and physicians pronounce despair and death upon me, a word of thine can shut the mouth of the grave, can renew the vigor and bloom of youth, and repair the decays of nature. If thou withhold the vital influence, my flesh languishes and expires, even among luxurious provisions of the table, and the recipes of the learned ; and it is thou only that can provide me a blissful habitation when this cottage is fallen to the ground. Father, into thy hand I commend my spirit, when it is dislodged from this mortal tabernacle ; and why should I not keep my spirit ever near thee, since every moment I am liable to be turned out of this dwelling, and sent a naked stranger into the unknown world of spirits ?

It is but a few days and nights more that I can have to do with sun, moon and stars ; a little time will finish all my commerce with this visible world ; but I have affairs of infinite and everlasting moment to transact with the great God. It is before thy tribunal I must stand as the final Judge of all my conduct, from whose decisive sentence there is no appeal ; and yet how fond am I, and wretchedly solicitous, to approve myself rather to creatures, whose opinion and sentence is but empty air. It is by thy judgment that I must stand or fall for ever ; the words of thy lips will be my eternal bliss, or my everlasting woe ; why then should I, a little insect, or atom of being, be concerned about the smiles or frowns of my fellow insects, my equal atoms ? Can all their applauses or their reproaches weigh a grain in the divine balance, that sacred and tremendous balance of justice, in which all my actions and my soul itself must be weighed ? Let all the creatures above and below frown and scowl upon me ; if my Creator smile, I am happy ; nor can all their frownings diminish my complete joy.

Forgive, gracious God, forgive the past follies and wanderings of a sinful worm from thee, the highest and the best of beings. I am even amazed at my own stupidity, that I could

live so much absent from thee, when my eternal all depends upon thee. Oh, may the little remnant of my days be spent in the presence of my God; and when I am constrained to converse with creatures, let me ever remember that I have infinitely more to do with my Creator, and thus shorten my talk and traffic with them, that I may have leisure to converse the longer with thee. Let me see thee in every thing; let me read thy name every where; sounds, shapes, colors, motions, and all visible things, let them all teach me an invisible God.

ACCESS TO GOD.

HOWEVER early in the morning you seek the gate of access, you find it already open; and however deep the midnight moment when you find yourself in the sudden arms of death, the winged prayer can bring an instant Saviour near. And this wherever you are. It needs not that you should enter some awful shrine, or put off your shoes on some holy ground. Could a memento be reared on every spot from which an acceptable prayer has passed away, and on which a prompt answer has come down, we should find *Jehovah-shammah*, "the Lord hath been here," inscribed on many a cottage hearth and many a dungeon floor. We should find it not only in Jerusalem's proud temple and David's cedar galleries, but in the fisherman's cottage by the brink of Gennesaret, and in the upper chamber where Pentecost began. And whether it be the field where Isaac went to meditate, or the rocky knoll where Jacob lay down to sleep, or the brook where Israel wrestled, or the den where Daniel gazed on the hungry lions and the lions gazed on him, or the hill-sides where the Man of Sorrows prayed all night, we should still discern the prints of the ladder's feet let down from heaven—the landing-place of mercies, because the starting-point of prayer. And all this whatsoever you are. It needs no saint, no proficient in piety, no adept in eloquent language, no dignity of earthly rank. It needs but a simple Hannah, or a lisping Samuel. It needs but a blind beggar, or a loathsome leazar. It needs but a penitent publican, or a dying thief. And it needs no sharp ordeal, no costly passport, no painful expiation to bring you to the mercy-seat; or rather, I should say, it needs the costliest of all: but the blood of atonement—the Saviour's merit—the name of Jesus, priceless as they are, cost the sinner nothing. They are freely put at his disposal, and instantly and constantly he may use them. This access to God in every place, at every moment, without any price or personal merit, is it not a privilege?—*Rev. James Hamilton.*